

I’m very pleased to report that the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ruled last week that the phrase “under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance is constitutional. The federal appeals court, which has jurisdiction over California and eight other Western states, is commonly viewed as having a liberal bias and had declared in 2002 that the phrase violates the Constitution, a decision about which I and many conservatives opposed. Fortunately, the United States Supreme Court subsequently threw out that ruling on a legal technicality. Michael Newdow, an atheist from Sacramento, filed the original suit and served as the lawyer for like-minded individuals in the most recent case. In a separate ruling last week, the Ninth Circuit unanimously concluded that our national motto, “In God We Trust,” is also constitutional.

I applaud the Ninth Circuit for upholding the Pledge and our national motto. While Americans hold diverse religious views, I believe voluntary public acknowledgments of our nation’s unmistakable [spiritual heritage](#) are entirely proper and reflect the historical role that faith has played in America—from the first settlements along our Eastern shores, to our push for independence, to the emancipation of all Americans, to our victory over fascism and atheist communism, to our united determination to protect the American people from another terrorist attack. I’m pleased that the Ninth Circuit broke away from their previous acceptance of the radical view that the First Amendment prohibits any public recognition of this history and my hope is that courts across our nation will do the same when they consider similar cases in the future.